

Centre Estrella Resource Fair



Each year, the resource fair at Centre Estrella, (Alma Family Services and Roybal Family Mental Health Center, or RFMHC), sets a new attendance record. “We didn’t expect that would happen this year,” said RFMHC Program Head Steve Hendrickson. “Last year, we had 750 visitors, when we held it on Cinco de Mayo. This year, one of our neighboring agencies was also hosting a resource fair up the street.

The annual event is a gathering of such community resources as medical and dental agencies, tutoring programs, women’s shelters, nutrition centers, Planned Parenthood, Metro Rail, the Los Angeles Legal Aid Foundation, the East Los Angeles Library and the Department of Public Social Services.



Before 12 PM, however, it was clear that the 7th Annual East Los Angeles event would set a new record. “We ran out of food, less than two hours into the event,” said Hendrickson. “That has not happened before. That means we had already topped 600 visitors in an hour and 45 minutes.” Organizers are still piecing together the final total, but it appears that the event had already passed the 800 person mark with an hour to go.



“The pattern was different this year,” Hendrickson said. “Usually people come early, and spend the day with us, socializing and enjoying the music. We saw many of our regular visitors come and leave earlier, followed by a steady flow of new visitors. Perhaps people were making the rounds at both area fairs.”

Past RFMHC Program Head Angelita Akahori-Diaz and Alma Family Services Director Lourdes Caracosa teamed up to launch the initial fair in 2007. That event drew an initial crowd of 250 visitors.



Roybal and Alma share the Centre Estrella building in East LA. Both staffs collaborate in holding fundraising activities to support the event, which is also co-sponsored by the present RFMHC Program Head. Roybal Senior Community Worker Ida Munoz, Intermediate Typist Clerk Martin Almanza and Medical Caseworker II Oscar Alvarez donated their Saturday to the event. Ida's husband Jesus Martinez also volunteered.

The event also includes performances by local dance and music groups. A particularly popular feature is the children's arts and crafts canopy.